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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Report of the Secretary-General

(in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 50/29 A)

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 50/29 A of 6 December 1995. Paragraph 8 of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"8. Requests the Secretary-General:

"(a) To provide all necessary facilities to the Special Committee, including those required for its visits to the occupied territories, so that it may investigate the Israeli policies and practices referred to in the present resolution;

"(b) To continue to make available such additional staff as may be necessary to assist the Special Committee in the performance of its tasks;

"(c) To circulate regularly to Member States the periodic reports mentioned in paragraph 6 above;

"(d) To ensure the widest circulation of the reports of the Special Committee and of information regarding its activities and findings, by all means available, through the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and, where necessary, to reprint those reports of the Special Committee that are no longer available;

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"(e) To report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the tasks entrusted to him in the present resolution."

2. All necessary facilities were provided to the Special Committee. Arrangements were made for it to meet in February, June and September 1996. Furthermore, the Special Committee carried out a field mission to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic in June 1996. Two periodic reports and the twenty-eighth annual report of the Special Committee were circulated to Member States (A/51/99 and Add.1 and 2).

3. Pursuant to paragraph 8 (d) of resolution 50/29 A, the Department of Public Information undertook the following activities:

(a) The Department of Public Information continued to provide press coverage of meetings of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and to feature and distribute United Nations information materials, documents and press releases on the activities of the Special Committee to representatives of non-governmental organizations and to the public at large through the United Nations information centres and services;

(b) In an edition of a booklet published in September 1994 in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish, under the title The United Nations and the Question of Palestine, the Department devoted a full chapter to human rights in the occupied territories. For the drafting of that chapter, it used materials available in reports of the Special Committee. In a revised edition of the booklet to be published in 1997, the Department will again use materials available in recent reports of the Special Committee;

(c) The Department, both at Headquarters and through the United Nations information centres and services, publicized the Special Committee's 1995 mission to the Middle East.

4. It should be also noted that, on 28 May 1996, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to all States drawing attention to resolution 50/29 A to D.

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IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report updates information on the financial situation of the United Nations provided in the Secretary-General's previous report on the subject (A/50/666/Add.7), based on contributions received as at 30 September 1996 and revised projections through the end of December 1996.

II. STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS

2. At 30 September 1996, 91 Member States had paid their regular budget assessments in full compared with 82 by the same date in 1995 and 66 in 1994. Nonetheless, outstanding regular budget assessments at 30 September 1996 totalled $714 million, of which $398 million related to assessments for 1996 and $316 million for prior years. Of the total amount due, 74 per cent was accounted for by contributions outstanding from the Member State with the highest rate of assessment.

3. Unpaid assessed contributions from all Member States to peacekeeping operations ($1.9 billion) and international tribunals ($20.5 million) totalled just under $2 billion.

4. Thus, at the end of September, the total of unpaid assessments due from all Member States amounted to $2.7 billion. This figure reflects a reduction of some $165 million from the position at the end of August. Nevertheless, it remains far too high for the financial health and viability of the Organization.

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III. CURRENT CASH POSITION

5. The cash position of the combined General Fund (the regular budget, the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account) has grown from $18 million at the end of June to $84 million at 31 August 1996. At the end of September, this negative position had grown further to $119 million. This cash deficit has accumulated despite a heartening effort by many Member States to meet their obligations to the United Nations, often in the face of serious economic problems.

IV. GENERAL FUND CASH FLOW PROJECTIONS

6. The cash position of the combined General Fund is still anticipated to remain negative through the end of 1996. It is, however, now projected that the Organization would end the year with a minus $103 million balance, down from the previous forecast of minus $243 million. This reduction of $140 million in the projected cash deficit of the combined General Fund reflects an estimated payment of $213 million in the final quarter of 1996 by the United States of America, an increase of $100 million compared with earlier estimates. It also reflects an amount of $40 million from the United States, which was received in September. This amount was subject to certification by the Government of the United States of America and, owing to uncertainties about its disbursement, had not been included in earlier estimates.

V. PEACEKEEPING CASH FLOW PROJECTIONS

7. As indicated in earlier reports, it must be emphasized that cash flow forecasts for peacekeeping operations are much more difficult to make than those for the regular budget. The timing and amount of peacekeeping assessments and the resultant effect on the predictability of receipts are much more volatile than is the case with the regular budget.

8. In the previous update, it was estimated that combined peacekeeping cash at 31 December 1996 would total $866 million. It is now projected to be $795 million, a reduction of $71 million.

9. This reduction in estimated peacekeeping cash at 31 December 1996 is due to information received on the timing of payments from the United States. Of the total estimated payments of $266 million in the period between September and December 1996, it is not understood that an amount of $71 million will, instead, be received in 1997.

10. The Secretary-General has been advised that the United States expects to pay $282 million for current peacekeeping assessments during its fiscal year beginning on 1 October 1996, and that an additional $20 million has been earmarked for contingencies related to crises in Africa, particularly Burundi. In addition, the Secretariat has been advised that $50 million is available for peacekeeping arrears subject to certain requirements of national legislation.

11. Apart from this new information regarding peacekeeping assessments, no significant changes have been made in other forecast assumptions concerning either the amounts to be paid or which Member States would be making payment. As a result, it is still the Secretary-General's intention to make payments in 1996 totalling $350 million to troop providers. An amount of $279 million has already been paid. In addition, it is also his intention to make a special year-end payment to troop providers of $275 million - contingent on receipt by year-end of the full amount of $400 million expected from the Russian Federation in 1996. The Russian Federation has to date paid $210 million. Additional payments may also be possible to equipment providers.

12. These payments would reduce to an estimated $700 million the amount owed to Member States at the end of 1996 for troop and equipment costs. The Secretary-General remains committed to reducing this amount as much and as quickly as is prudently possible.

VI. CONCLUSION

13. Based on the assumptions included in the current projections, it is now forecast that the combined General Fund will show a cash deficit of $103 million at the end of 1996 and that combined peacekeeping accounts will have a positive balance of $795 million. The combined cash position of the Organization would thus be $692 million. The overall improvement of $69 million reflects an acceleration of cash inflows compared to the prior forecast for regular budget purposes of $140 million and a slowdown of peacekeeping cash inflows of $71 million.

14. Despite the relatively healthier outlook for the regular budget, the Organization is still obliged to resort to borrowing from peacekeeping accounts to maintain its basic operations. The projected level of this borrowing at 31 December is still such as to make it probable that the practice will have to continue to some degree in 1997. Not only is this inherently poor financial practice but the level of peacekeeping balances is quite likely to decline in the immediate future, depending on the level of new assessments to be approved by the General Assembly. There is also a clear danger that the ongoing financial crisis will continue to divert attention from, and impact negatively on, efforts for internal reform and renewal of the Secretariat.

15. The relative improvement now foreseen is welcome but it should be stressed once again that the overall financial situation of the Organization remains precarious. The amount of unpaid assessments at 31 December 1996 will still be far in excess of any reasonable amount for prudent financial management. It is now estimated that Member States will, on 31 December 1996, owe past due assessments of $2.1 billion to the United Nations and about 65 per cent of this amount will be owed by the United States.

16. The Secretary-General appreciates the efforts of Member States to reduce the amounts owed to the United Nations. He continues to appeal to all Member States to emulate the growing number that have made such efforts to meet fully the obligations to the United Nations that they themselves have undertaken.

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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Report of the Secretary-General

(In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 50/29 B)

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 50/29 B of 6 December 1995, the operative part of which reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

...

"1. Reaffirms that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 is applicable to the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

"2. Demands that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and that it comply scrupulously with the provisions of the Convention;

"3. Calls upon all States parties to the Convention, in accordance with article 1, common to the four Geneva Conventions, to exert all efforts in order to ensure respect for its provisions by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

"4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution."

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2. On 28 May 1996, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the resolution, that the Minister inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.

4. By a note verbale dated 28 May 1996, the Secretary-General also drew the attention of all States parties to the Convention to paragraph 3 of resolution 50/29 B.

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Report of the Secretary-General

(in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 50/29 C)

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 50/29 C of 6 December 1995, the operative part of which reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Determines that all measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in violation of the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and contrary to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council are illegal and have no validity, and demands that Israel desist forthwith from taking any such measures or actions;

"2. Reaffirms in particular that the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967 are illegal and an obstacle to achieving comprehensive peace;

"3. Notes with satisfaction the return of a number of deportees to the occupied Palestinian territory and calls upon Israel to facilitate the return of the remainder;

"4. Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to accelerate the release of all remaining Palestinians arbitrarily detained or imprisoned, in line with agreements reached;

"5. Calls for complete respect by Israel, the occupying Power, of all fundamental freedoms of the Palestinian people, pending the extension of the self-government arrangements to the rest of the West Bank;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 28 May 1996, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the resolution, that the Minister inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.